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~~ADDRESS BY~~ STANSFIELD TURNER

L1 CIRA ~~Speech~~ (Central Intelligence Retirees Association)

L1 April 1, 1977

L2 Speech

DIRECTOR STANSFIELD TURNER: I'm very pleased that my first opportunity to speak in public since becoming the Director of our wonderful agency is here with you, some of the people who have given so much to this organization over the many years. At the same time, I must admit that after 3 1/2 weeks in office, to come here and try to say anything to a group like this about intelligence and the operation of the best intelligence agency in the world is like the man who drowned in the Johnstown flood in 1932. When he went to heaven, St. Peter asked him to tell about his harrowing experiences in that flood. And just as he got up, he realized that sitting in the front row was Noah.

~~[Laughter]~~

With some sense of humility in front of all of you Noahs, let me -- let me just touch on three points, because I'd like to have time to field your questions, if you have any, afterwards. Three points as to the preliminary views that I have on having been roughly associated with this organization since the 2nd of February, when I got a phone call in Naples, Italy, and said the President wanted to see me tomorrow. And I said, "About what?" And they wouldn't tell me. But I began to get suspicious.

But in those several months, I have come to a view that the time is probably as ripe today as it has been since World War II for us to market the product of the Central Intelligence Agency throughout the government and throughout the country of the United States. And I say market because I think we have to sell our product, but I do think there is receptivity for it today.

I can assure you that the President of the United States is very interested in the intelligence organization of this country, and he is giving of his own personal time to receive our product, to understand how we're going about it, and to be of assistance to us. And he has indicated very explicitly to the top leaders of the agency and the rest of the community in a private meeting three weeks ago that he wants personally to participate in the process of formulating the requirements, the priorities by which we go about our collection and our analysis, and that he wants to participate very personally in the evaluation of the product that we give him. And I'm very pleased that we have that wholehearted support.

In my several months of wandering around Capitol Hill, I would say to you that my appraisal there today is that the time is also ripe. After several years of harassment, badgering, investigating, I sincerely believe that the Congress of the United States has realized that the bottom line is a necessity for a good, sound intelligence organization for the country. And they have realized more through this investigation process than they ever did before of the value that we can give to them, the valuable product that we can give to them.

We're still going to have carping and criticism, and there's still a great deal of suspicion about us; and so we have work to do to allay those suspicions, to reassure them that we're going to do things exactly as they dictate and require, by the law.

But, they want our products, they want to understand what's going on in the world, and they realize they need to do so more than ever before today, in this kind of a world atmosphere that we have.

And so I believe that we can continue the good relationship that has been evolving ever since the new Executive Order that came out in February of 1976 and established a new intelligence relationship between the Congress and the agency. So I'm optimistic that their attitude is one of constructive approach to our problems.

I also am optimistic that the time is ripe for the public of this country. They, too, have read more that's bad about the intelligence community than good, because that's what the newspapers have given them for several years. But I think underneath that I sense an understanding of the importance of maintaining a good intelligence function. And I think if you'll remember just a few weeks ago, when the allegations were made about payments to King Hussein, and if you read the editorials across the country and you read the letters to the editors, you would find that the great majority of American public opinion was on our side, that that was not a good thing to have released to the public. And I think that is a good sign that we have a base of support.

Finally, I think the time is ripe, because in the brief association I've had with your successors in the Central Intelligence Agency, I am impressed, I'm very impressed by their professionalism, their dedication and their morale. I think it's amazing and a great tribute that they have come through this period of badgering with such high morale, such continued dedication. And I think a great deal of credit goes to Dick Helms, Bill Colby, Bob...

~~[Apples]~~

And to George Bush, who is not here with us today. They brought this organization through.

~~[Apples]~~

And I go back to what I said a minute ago, that we must now sell our product; and that means we must have a good product. And I've emphasized to the people in the agency that to me that means a product that's not a result of a committee compromise, but it is a result of bold, innovative analysis that will take chances.

We cannot just try to reach agreement in our vast bureaucracy. And in my view, that means particularly that the Central Intelligence Agency must stand up firm and be counted, because I think here is where the heart of the good analysis can and should be done.

My second observation in these weeks of learning about your profession, which is now my profession, is the whole issue of legality and propriety. And I certainly come away with a very clear feeling that most of the criticisms that we've suffered through in the past several years have been criticisms using today's standards to yesterday's actions. And we're going to suffer some more of that.

But I assure you that my objective is to look to the future, to answer honestly and forthrightly whatever comes up about the past, but to do everything I can to put that aside, to make sure that we are concentrating on the contribution that this community must make to this country in the future. Because if we lose sight of that, we'll have lost the [unintelligible] of great value to the United States of America.

I am persuaded that the operations of the agency are in full accordance with legality and the standards of propriety that we all believe in. And I don't have concerns there. My concerns, in fact, are in the other direction, that we may overreact. And I don't want the people who are in the clandestine and the covert business to get cautious, to get conservative, to fail to think up and come up with the good ideas that can help us in either collecting our intelligence or carrying out our covert operations, if they are necessary and authorized. And I'm urging them that. But I'm urging them to be sure that in doing so they understand the law, they understand the standards of propriety that have been established, and whenever they are in doubt, that they push the decisions up, and that ultimately, if there's doubt, they come to me. Because I want to shoulder those decisions. The only thing that I'm concerned of is if someone makes a bad judgment and violates either the law or a sense of propriety that we have, if it's done without my knowledge, then the agency will suffer a very serious blow. If it's done with my knowledge, I can be the scapegoat and take most of that; and I'm expendable, but the Central Intelligence Agency is certainly not for this country.

~~[Applause]~~

Lastly, let me touch upon the serious problems that we are having today, and on which I solicit your support, in the area of the classification of information and the maintenance of that security.

We all are very disturbed at the leaks, the stories that have come into the press repeatedly. And I assure you -- and I

don't need to assure you -- the damage that this is doing to our country. And I'm trying to move in two directions.

One is to increase the compartmentation, decrease the dissemination of that very, very sensitive material, particularly about the sources and methods of collecting intelligence, but also some of the sensitive product. This is a difficult and in some way is a dangerous step. We can't get so compartmented that we don't have a full understanding of what is available to us. But, on the other hand, we must avoid these serious leaks.

And I would urge you, in your contacts, in your speeches, in your dealings with the public, to remind everybody that there has been serious damage. You can take something like the story about King Hussein -- and I've seen newspaper columnists argue that it hasn't damaged our country to have that leaked. And I'm not passing judgment on the international affairs impact of that. But I wrote to a columnist who made that judgment the other day and I said, "You missed the point when you said there wasn't damage from that. The damage is to the future of our intelligence collection capability."

And I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, that every day I receive another report of people around the world who have worked with us and our working with us who are disturbed and who are not quite as willing as they were yesterday. And much more of that, and we'll be in serious trouble in the long run, not today, not tomorrow, not next week, but some years from now.

We must stop this, and I need your help and support in every way.

On the other side, I'm also doing -- or, taking an attitude of almost contrary approach. I believe that there is gross overclassification in our government as a whole, not necessarily or particularly in the Central Intelligence Agency, but throughout the government. And as you well appreciate, that leads to a laxity in the handling of this material.

So I hope to encourage a movement, on the one hand, towards greater tightness and security of the very essential information, and, on the other hand, to a greater declassification, and right out the bottom, right out the bottom to unclassify it, because I believe there's a lot of products of our country -- of our Central Intelligence Agency that can be made available to the people of this country on an unclassified basis. They're paying for it, they're paying for you and me and the other members of the agency; and if we have things we can offer to them, fine.

And I hope that in the process of doing this, we can help to restore that essential confidence in our community, in our agency that is going to be essential for this long haul. We must view the

actions that have to be taken with that long prospect in mind. We must be able to attract into our agency today, at the bottom, young, bright, dedicated people, and they must be able to feel that they're going into a profession that has the respect of the country.

And so, on the one hand, I want to tighten up so that we don't have these leaks which discredit us -- It's not our fault, usually, but they do discredit it; and, on the other hand, I want to open up more and take away as much of the mystique which can be taken away of our profession so that the country develops that sense of confidence that will give us a foundation for the long run.

In all of these directions, I need your support.

I thank you for having me with you today, and I'd look forward to trying to respond to any of your questions. Thank you.

~~[Inaudible]~~

MAN: What are the prospects for young, intelligent [Inaudible]?

DIRECTOR TURNER: The question's been asked of what are the prospects for a young gentleman like this to get on the payroll of the agency.

You're talking of people of your age?

MAN: I was talking of...

DIRECTOR TURNER: Your son's. I missed the point.

~~[Inaudible]~~

DIRECTOR TURNER: I wasn't -- actually, I've got to admit to you I was a little bit surprised to find out how many of the retired community are on the payroll at the agency.

~~[Laughter and applause]~~

DIRECTOR TURNER: Nothing wrong with the retired community, and there's tremendous, tremendous talent here. But just as this gentleman's question indicates, I'm concerned that, number one, we have the opportunity for flow-through; number two, that we give the impression to the world that we are a forward-looking organization that is interested in building for the future.

I think that the opportunities for your sons and daughters to come work for us are very good today. The budget for this next year will hold the size of the organization at its present level, unless we're cut by the Congress, and I -- you know, I don't expect any major slice out of it. So I think there will be the normal kind

of turnover, not substantial reduction.

And I would say to you also that if we were ever faced with any reductions, I would be very insistent that we not reduce the inflow at the bottom. We're going to have to be tough on ourselves and take people out of the middle and the top so that we can keep that youth coming through.

Yes, sir.

MAN: Can you tell us something about the new Assistant Director, Mr. Bowle?

DIRECTOR TURNER: Can I tell something about the new Assistant Director, Mr. Bowle, who was announced in the papers yesterday?

Yes, I certainly can.

Robert Bowle was once on the policy planning staff of the State Department. He's been a consultant to the agency over the years, I think with the Board of National Estimates at one point. He's been the founder of the Center of International Affairs at Harvard University. He's a very distinguished academician. He's 67 years old. He's a very seasoned, mature man in both the academic and governmental worlds.

I've been associated with him in one way and another now for a number of years, and I have come to have a tremendous respect for the incisiveness of his thinking, for his ability to get to the core of a problem, and for his objectivity and balance. I think he will add a great deal to us in our estimating process in this regard.

In addition, he has such a fine reputation, both in the government and in academia, that I think he will attract to us people for consultation, people for conferences; and I hope that this is part of opening up and lifting some of the mystique of our profession so that we can again gain confidence within the country.

Yes, sir.

MAN: ~~[unclear]~~

DIRECTOR TURNER: I get in trouble every time I talk about tightening up on security.

~~[Smattering of applause]~~

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, in my confirmation hearings, asked me if I was in favor of criminal sanctions; and, frankly, not knowing much about the law or anything, I jumped right up and said yes. Because I feel just like you do, that we

can't let this go on.

~~[Applause]~~

As recently as this morning, The New York Times has taken me to task for that, and I've been to taks for it ever since.

Now, what I really feel today is that we must find some form of sanction that will inhibit people from making these releases. I have no interest in punishing anybody or sending them to jail. I don't want it to happen; that's the thing we want to avoid. And I think there are four ways to do that.

One is not to classify as much information, not to over-classify.

Second is to limit the number of people who get the information, and thereby may leak it.

The third is to reinforce the criminal sanctions in the existing Espionage Act, or create a new act.

And the fourth is to reinforce the present administrative procedures and/or enact a law that has civil sanctions against this in it.

And we in the Executive Department are today debating between those four procedures or some combination of them as to what will be the most effective way and the way we can either get enacted by the Congress or enact in our own executive orders to deter people from this very, very serious leaking of information.

MAN: Is it true that nothing will be done against Agee if he returns to the country?

DIRECTOR TURNER: It's true that nothing will be done against Agee for what he has done. But he's not clear -- I mean he's not free to do whatever he wants here without risk of prosecution.

General Cushman?

GENERAL CUSHMAN: I'm interested in whether you have formulated an opinion yet on the Team A/Team B approach to national estimates.

~~[Laughter]~~

DIRECTOR TURNER: Well, I sure have formulated an approach to conducting strategic analysis in the newspapers.

~~[Laughter]~~



I would say, in all candor, that my strong desire is to be sure that divergent views are represented in all of our analyses. Hopefully, this can be done from within our own resources, normally, that we can be sure that we bring together for an estimate like that people who have different basic views.

When that isn't necessarily the case -- and also just to check ourselves, I think it's good to have some outside people come in. Maybe they are a National Board of Estimates, maybe they are an organization where we draw from people who have classified clearances from time to time. I haven't settled on that, and that's Dr. Bowles's territory when he gets here.

And maybe, from time to time, when you're doing that, you would want to have a polarized Team B and a polarized Team A.

My personal inclination, General, is that I'd rather like to see people work in harmony, with their divergent views, but in the same group, and battle them out and have dissenting opinions in the analysis when it comes forward. I think that's healthier. But I wouldn't rule out the fact that there may be an opportunity when a B and an A, or a C and an A-B polarization may be useful in an individual circumstance. But divergence of opinion is essential.

MAN: Could you comment on some of the recent proposals on reorganization of the agency and the community?

DIRECTOR TURNER: Yes. I'm leaving here to go to a meeting on it.

~~[Laughter]~~

Part of the optimism I have with regard to Congress is the fact that there is very real and constructive interest in the Congress in helping us to reshape the community, if necessary, into a more effective form. Basically, they're seeking, I believe, to strengthen the hand of the Director of Central Intelligence over the entire community.

Jack Mallory has written a good article in The Washington Star with some concern as to whether this might lead to a separation of my two jobs. The decision has certainly not been made. It's one of the things we're going to talk about this afternoon, and it's not an imminent decision. We're in the midst of a study and a considerable debate on this whole issue.

And you probably have heard that since I've taken over this office, I have chosen to spend part of my time in the Executive Office Building, down by the White House, and part of my time in the wonderful office on the seventh deck in -- oops, the seventh floor.

~~[Laughter]~~

DIRECTOR TURNER: Seventh floor in Langley. And I've done that very much because I think it's my responsibility to be the agency's front to the world, to establish and maintain that contact with the White House, with the National Security Council staff, with the Congress, with the Pentagon. Because, again, we're going to have to, I think, sell our product, we're going to have to get everybody's confidence, from the Hill on down; and the more contact we have, the better off we are.

And I don't find the personal conflict in my mind, in the short time I've been here, with being the director of this agency and being the Director of Central Intelligence as well.

But what the wisdom of the Congress, what the wisdom of the President and the Vice President will be on all this, I don't know. But I would assure you only that I have not found one person involved and interested in this process whose end objective isn't to strengthen and to make more certain the future of the intelligence community of this country. And I assure you that within that, everyone, when you peel back the cover, recognizes that the hard core of that intelligence community is the agency.

Thank you.

~~[Applause]~~